

The Acts.

C H A P. I.

NOW when the day of swearing was fully come, and the tribe that had usurped, had wasted all it's tricks, and every subterfuge had failed.

2. Every one returned to his own nest; for fear and tribulation had come upon them, like unto the tribulation when a man taketh physic, and no assistance is nigh.

3. And behold S—s lifted up his eyes, and saw that the whole squad was fled; yea, that it was all morrised.

4. And he groaned inwardly in his spirit, as if he had said; lo, my iniquity must cease among the people, for the means thereof faileth me.

5. And as he passed to his own den, all was still and silent around.

6. And as he travers'd his hall, thick darkness overspread him, and his tongue was dry in his mouth.

7. And on a sudden the door-posts quaked, and the foul spirit stood before him: his countenance was dark and gloomy, like that of S—s when he fitteth on the bench and the culprit payeth not his fees.

8. And S—s trembled.

9. Then Satan smote him on the ear, and said whence comest thou?—and he answered and said, from walking to and fro in the earth, and seeking mischief.

10. And now that mine iniquity must cease, I grieve, in that thy precepts of old begin to fail me.

11. For have not I practiced thy arts, and abided by thy sayings; yea, altogether loved the deeds of darkness, and despised those which endured the light.

12. And now I am becoming a reproach among thy servants, even among those whom I have trained in thy ways.

13. Then Satan breathed anew upon him, and he was filled with dissimulation, hypocrisy, cunning and lawyers craft, once again.

14. Now lawyers craft being interpreted meaneth knavery.

15. And being thus filled, Satan rubbed his face, not with a warming pan like the children of the Amalekites; but with his own face rubbed he him.

16. And his likeness became as his own harden'd in inflexible effrontery; insomuch, that it resembled well the face of Satan.

17. And Satan saw that it was good.

18. And he took him by the shoulders, and said; I have made thee a vessel fit for my purpose, and I have furnished thee throughout, see thou omit not that which shall be suggested unto thee.

19. And having said this, the door of the inner room was rent in twain, and two daughters of the tribe of Gad appeared: and they were sitting in council and S—s was by a jerk placed between them.

20. And the tongue of the elder of these daughters, was running at its usual rate, and foul epithet, and slander were no strangers to it; insomuch that the uncircumcised called her Betty Flounder by reason that her discourse favoured of Billingsgate, and the filth and smell thereof.

21. And the other of these daughters was the helpmate of S—s, and had helped him into many difficulties by her love of rat-catching.

22. Nevertheless the woman was of an high mind and proud spirit, though her generation suited not therewith; and she had put S—s to do these things because her soul thirsted after the chief place in the Play-house and in the Synagogue.

23. Now when Betty saw that S—s was seated with them, her womb swelled as though she had been drunk with new beer.

24. And the foulness of her tongue began to wax great; insomuch that she refrained not from hard-sayings and reproaches.

25. And she blasphemed, and said; curse the laps they are too hard for thee Fra—k; it is even as I said, thou wilt be kicked out out of thine office, even the office thou hast usurped.

26. And she reproached him with much reviling, and said; hast thou forgot how I straddled and sweat and drank and swore and bribed and lied to do thee and thy cause good.

27. Now therefore hearken what I and thy helpmate have to propose, and see how it liketh thee.

28. We will go forth and create confusion and uproar amongst thine enemies, and those that like justice better than thee.

29. And in the shape of a letter will we go forth.

30. And thus shall it be.—We will cause a letter to be written to the wife of the chief magistrate of the city.

31. And therein we will put a lying spirit, and say unto her;—thee and thy husband will we destroy and root out from among the weavers; yea, utter destruction shall come upon thee and thy household, like the swift destruction of a bay-fever.

32. Unless thou swearest in the young man, who hath kicked Fra—k out of his office.

33. And when she shall read this, she will shew the contents thereof to her husband.

34. And he will become angry and full of choler; insomuch that in the rising thereof he shall have no regard to the justice of the young man's cause, or to the oath he has taken.

35. But will swagger in the seat of justice, and treat the young man with contempt and disdain.

36. And he will become furious as Behemoth, and obstinate as a donkey.

37. Now a donkey being interpreted meaneth an ass.

38. And Betty lifted up her voice again and said;—when the young man appeareth in the assembly of the people, thou shalt challenge him as having wrote the letter.

39. And this thou shalt do without fear and trembling, and with thy usual steadfast countenance; lest peradventure thy blushes betray thee.

40. And thus shalt thou cover the young man with confusion, which will be interpreted as a sign of guilt.

41. And Betty caused pens and ink to be set before the helpmate of S—s, and she dictated to her even as has been said.

42. [Now the helpmate of S—s was well skilled in cunning learning, and the hand-writing of any man could imitate and well adopt.

43. And the woman was also knowing in other devices, and in the framing incendiary letters her like was not to be found throughout the land.

44. For a testimony thereof remaineth to this day in Gilgal in the house of Corfellis, written in the language of the quakers who are of the tribe of the laps.]

45. And when the letter to the wife of the chief magistrate was completed, it was sent to the metropolis of Syria, that it might seem to come from the place where the young man resided.

46. And when the morrow appeared, and the chief priests and scribes and elders were assembled, and the young man was feated among them, it was done unto him even as was proposed.

47. And the people marvelled thereat greatly, insomuch as they saw villainy triumphant over justice.—And they said surely this also is one of Fra—k's tricks.

48. And the young man departed in concern for the great evil, with which the city was visited; but he blushed not although he had not forgot how to do so.

49. And the squad which had supported S—s in all his misdoings, again crept forth and shouted; and they shouted vehemently as men do that have not long to shout.

50. And S—s gathered some of the shouters, and placed them in hiding places in the jail and in the play-house, and they shouted more violently than before because their numbers were small.

51. And their voice ascended on high; and some said surely a multitude shouteth: but those which hissed and groaned were not numbered, for their number no man could reckon.

52. And S—s and his helpmate sat unconcerned, because it was grand so to do.

53. Now all these things were done, that the sayings of old Ennew the prophet might be fulfilled, and that the name of S—s might be a reproach and bye-word to all generations.